A Synopsis of the Proposed Research Study Entitled

A POSTCOLONIAL STUDY OF SEX AND VIOLENCE IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF J.M.COETZEE

Submitted to

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I. INTRODUCTION:

The Inter-war years and the post-war mood culminated into the depression and its problems of great distress. Lack of positive optimism, frequent appearance of violence and sadism did not remain the surprising themes for the world accustomed to the thought of genocide, global conflict and nuclear destruction. Many of the writers from younger generation are involved in the new problem arising from the bizarre and contradicting nature of an affluent society. There is a mixture of realism, cynicism, dark comedy, shrewd comments and satire, which used to express the basic values. Stark individualism became the essence of characterization.

Colonialism, as a ladder, allows the emergence of post-colonialism. Colonialism and imperialism are often used interchangeably. Colonialism denotes the matter in which one culture appropriates the land, people and resources of another to further its imperialists ends. Postcolonial studies adopted and referred to anthropological and sociological concepts of culture and society. The economic and cultural structures exported by the West to the former periphery are not as homogeneous as the adversaries proclaimed by globalization are. The concepts of culture have become central for critical theories in general and postcolonial theory in particular. Commonwealth literature is a veritable storehouse of different cultures and perspectives.

Dealing with the issue of sex and violence one can find its essence in human nature and human nature itself is the essence of literature. Therefore, does sex and violence becomes major concerns with its good and evil aspects as depicted in 20th

century literature. The preoccupation with the sexual origin of action has developed into superseding interest in sexuality, the use of language, which once would have been considered too distasteful to print. In the natural sense, sex is the means of regeneration, but with the changing attitudes of human beings, sex has ascribed idiosyncratic meanings with its different roles. Through such works, one can find an appropriate way to understand the affected person and the way to deal with them.

Violence, as a part of human nature exhibits on a widespread range from very personal to that of universal and from the very primitive stage to that of the recent advanced world. Beyond Darwin's philosophy of survival, violence manifests through many evil means. Violence manifests itself through the two World Wars fought to destroy or to take hold of the other countries and at very personal level in day-to-day street fights or domestic quarrels. Contemplating on fundamentalism and violence at the global level, Khalid Sohail claims four factors that generate violence. He explores these factors as religious factors, political factors, socio-economic factors and psychological factors. As these factors are present in postcolonial literature it becomes worth studying to understand the literature as well as society.

The purpose of studying sex and violence as the major concerns is to understand it as the dominant problem at global level. Sex and violence as the part of human nature manifest in a variety of ways .Its presentation in contemporary literature provides a way to understand it in order to avoid its effects.

J. M. Coetzee's work becomes worth studying as they are characterized with modernist and postmodernist aspects with universal appeal. His work has sex and violence as its major concerns. Though depicted as central and marginal to South Africa the episodes and evidences of sex and violence with its various aspects and different roles emerges as the universal problem that every society of the world has to

face. Many critics are of the view that realistic depiction of sex and violence in fiction as it can draw novelist's participation in the atrocities. J. M. Coetzee is one of the serious writers who dramatize such darker aspects of experience in their literature skillfully. Coetzee's fiction unmasks the false universals of liberal ideology. His novels are known as an ironic swan-song to liberal humanism, presenting a deconstructive allegory of humanism's failure, residue of humanism, inability to escape from tradition, complex and shifting identity. He is known as a new kind of author, an academic critic can't be paralleled with any other post modern novelists. It is his skill that his work reflects the regional as well as universal issue.

David Atwell, a literary critic, about the future directions of criticism of Coetzee states obvious possibilities of the feminist readings of Coetzee, the feminine narrators, psychoanalysis, Oedipal complex, Sexuality, the fear of death, bovarism and symptomatic language, dramatized relation between the speaking subject and the unconscious, reading the text as an extension of the body, Coetzee's affiliations in postmodern respects, the historical vision, the semantics and ethics of colonialism. Atwell's proposed direction paves the way to observe sex and violence as one of the major concerns in J. M. Coetzee's novel. Though different critics had studied J. M. Coetzee's novels with various aspects, there is no particular work done on postcolonial study regarding the depiction of sex and violence in his novels. There is a need to explore J. M. Coetzee's novels through this aspect. Therefore, the present research work is an attempt to illustrate the selected novels by J. M. Coetzee that consist sex and violence at its core.

II. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH WORK:

- To study the postcolonial aspects in J. M. Coetzee's novels. And focus sex and violence as major concerns in his postcolonial novels.
- To critically analyze the major as well as minor characters against their sexuality and violent activities from postcolonial background.
- To critically analyze the importance of the episodes of sex and violence in plot-construction and setting of J. M. Coetzee's postcolonial novels.
- To study writer's approach behind the presentation of sex and violence in his novels.
- To study writer's narrative skill used in the presentation of sex and violence in J. M. Coetzee's postcolonial novels.
- To explore the literary world presented in the novels of J. M. Coetzee. to indicate the burning issue of sex and violence in postcolonial South Africa.
- To focus writer's literary presentation of the sensitive issue of sex and violence for its local as well as global appeal.

III. HYPOTHESIS:

- The problem of sex and violence persists since the primitive age.
- J. M. Coetzee's novels consist of colonial and postcolonial setting.
- J. M. Coetzee's novels consist of episodes of sex and violence.
- Presentation of sex and violence in literature needs its proper critical interpretation otherwise reader can mislead by its mere sensual interpretation.
- The South African society had suffered much due to the problem of sex and violence.
- The problem of sex and violence cannot be restricted to the particular age, society or region.

- The problem of sex and violence has corrupted the society, culture and floated away the family system.
- Proper critical interpretation of sex and violence presented in literature can help the readers to understand the situation and psychology of the oppressor and the oppressed.
- The problem of sex and violence is sensitive but can be sorted out in different ways that might result in the enviable improvement in relation between oppressor and the oppressed.

IV. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The Scope Of The Study: -The present research makes an attempt of a postcolonial study of sex and violence in J. M. Coetzee's select novels from postcolonial point of view. The present study covers following seven novels by J. M. Coetzee.

1. *In the Heart of Country*. (1977).
2. *Waiting for the Barbarians*. (1980).
3. *Life & Times of Michael K*. (1983).
4. *Age of Iron.* (1990).
5. *Disgrace*. (1999).
6. *Slow Man.* (2005).
7. *Diary of a Bad Year.* (2007).

Limitations Of The Study: -To give justice for the research work, this study is restricted only to J. M. Coetzee's selected novels. The study also highlights racial, political, economical and materialistic issues which lead to destructive effects of sex and violence. The colonial and post-colonial context of sex and violence in the texts will be studied. The significance of the study is to show the effects and affects of sex and violence raised from marginalized issues to the global.

V. THE PROBLEM OF RESEARCH

- J.M. Coetzee is a prolific South African novelist who implements higher innovative narrative techniques.
- The writer skillfully depicts the issues of sex and violence as major concerns of his novels in colonial and postcolonial context.
- Writer's work raises sex and violence as the racial, political, socio-economical and materialistic issues which lead to destructive effects.
- The episodes of sex and violence are boldly presented of in J. M. Coetzee's novels.
- Sex and violence, the part of human nature manifests in a variety of ways, which is needed to be interpreted in its social background.
- The presentation in J. M. Coetzee's novels provides a way to understand it in order to avoid its effects.
- Though the writer has used disturbing issues of sex and violence, he shows the pitiable situation of South African people through his art of characterization. .
- Sensitive narratives in writer's novel require the comprehension of attitude and approach of the writer behind the purpose of its use in novels.
- The significance of the study is to show the effects and affects of sex and violence in social and literary context raised from marginalized to the universal issues.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

1. The present research is analytical, interpretative, critical, and evaluative in nature.
2. Postcolonial aspects and terms will be explored from the works of J.M. Coetzee in this research.
3. The text of the writer will be analyzed from the point of view of the purpose of the presentation of sex and violence.

4. The character and the situations from the text will be analyzed to follow the postcolonial concerns regarding sex and violence.
5. The study also includes the use of images and symbols by the writer to develop the respective concerns.
6. The text will be followed for its regional and universal appeal regarding the problem of sex and violence.
7. An attempt would be undertaken to trace the role of postcolonial literature presenting sex and violence to nurture eternal ethical values in society.
8. Sources and references will also be collected from libraries and websites.
9. The primary sources would be put to close scrutiny and secondary sources will be critically observed to support the arguments.

VII. TENTATIVE CHAPTER SCHEME OF THE STUDY:

For the convenience of study, the research has been subdivided into following chapters:

Chapter - One : Introduction

Chapter - Two : Review of Literature

Chapter - Three : Postcolonialism, Sex and Violence: Theoretical Background.

Chapter - Four : Postcolonial Study of Sex in J. M. Coetzee's Novels.

Chapter - Five : Postcolonial Study of Violence in J. M. Coetzee's Novels.

Chapter - Six : Conclusion.

1) CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION:

This chapter consists of two parts- the introduction to South African English novel and J. M. Coetzee's contribution to South African English literature.

South African English novel:

Chronologically African literature is divided into two parts- Traditional African literature and Modern African literature. Modern African literature differs from the traditional in its colonial context. The chapter will discuss how South African English novel gradually emerged out of the jerk in literature of short stories and latter in autobiographies. There were remarkable autobiographies during 1950s and 1960s where authors, after establishing their identity as a popular short story writers or autobiographers, dealt with the root themes of South African society more directly in their novels. Novel as a popular form in Africa is sophisticated after the enormous success of Peter Abrahams first novel *Song of the City* appeared in 1945. After the exiles of 1950s in 1960s South African novel was uplifted to the certain maturity that could present life like reflection of South African society and the contributory liberal novelists were Alan Paton, Nadine Gordimer, and Dan Jacobson. In late 1960s and 1970s the liberal paradigm of South African literary realism came under doubt due to the increased crisis of social and racial cleavages. After 1970s novels in South Africa were written with an individual writer based attitude towards society.

Life and Work of J. M. Coetzee:

John Maxwell Coetzee [J. M. Coetzee] was born on 9 February 1940 in Cape Town, in South Africa. He is a popular novelist and literary critic. Coetzee won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2003. His novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* was chosen by Penguin Books for their series "Great Books of the 20th Century". His literary work has an influence of Samuel Beckett, Ford Madox Ford, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Daniel Defoe, and Franz Kafka. In addition to his novels, he has published critical works and

translations from Dutch and Afrikaans. Coetzee has to his credit many kinds of literary works such as fiction, fictionalized autobiography, non-fiction, Translations and Introductions. *Dusklands* (1974) is the first novel by J. M. Coetzee. It is a presentation and critique of the violence inherent in the colonialist and imperialist mentality of the Western world. J. M. Coetzee's fictional works include *Dusklands* (1974), *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), *Foe* (1986), *Age of Iron* (1990), *The Master of Petersburg* (1994), *Disgrace* (1999), *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), *Slow Man* (2005), *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007), *Rocky Mountain High Chinorado* (2007), *Summertime* (2009) , *The Childhood of Jesus*. (2013), *The Schooldays of Jesus* (2016) and *The Death of Jesus* (2019). Coetzee's contribution to South African literature includes his fictionalized autobiographies and non-fictional works also.

2) CHAPTER TWO: LITERARY REVIEW:

This chapter lists the texts that contribute to the critical analysis of J. M. Coetzee's novels from the present research point of view. It includes secondary sources and discusses the critical view that supports the statement of the present research. The ultimate goal is to bring the reader up to date with current literature on the topic of the present research. The focus of the literature review is to summarize and synthesize the ideology of the present research. The chapter includes the secondary sources that provoked the study of Literature and Society in South Africa, major concerns in postcolonial literature, seriousness behind the study of sex and violence and relevance and perspectives of J. M. Coetzee's novels. Literary review focuses on the studies of different critics on J. M. Coetzee's novels with various aspects. The chapter aims to bring out that there is no particular work done on postcolonial study regarding the depiction of sex and violence in his novels.

3) CHAPTER THREE: POSTCOLONIALISM, SEX AND VIOLENCE: CONCEPT AND THEORY:

This chapter aims to clarify the relevance of the concept and theory of postcolonialism, sex and violence from present research point of view. Postcolonialism: Concept and Theory: The concept of commonwealth and colonialism will be primarily analyzed. Colonialism denotes the matter in which one culture appropriates the land, people and resources of another to further its imperialists ends. The process of decolonization and the impacts leftover in postcolonialism will be analyzed. As a body of thought, postcolonialism has multiple origins and theories that have reshaped the traditional ideology that survives in colonialism. Postcolonial studies generally moves between the transitional period of colonialism and decolonization and its aftermath which underscores historical, cultural and civilization transactions. African countries, once colonized and ruled by the west, produced literature responding colonial experience and writing back in postcolonial era. Many writers after establishing their identity as a popular short story writer or autobiographer, dealt with the root themes of South African society more directly in their novels.

Sex: Theoretical Background: This part of chapter will analyze the concept and theory of the term "sex" as to be used in the present research. It will show the preoccupation with the sexual origin of action developed into superseding interest in sexuality, the use of language, which once would have been considered too distasteful to print. Due to the influence of Sigmund Freud, as well as the general break down of Victorian moral attitudes ascribed the preoccupation with sex, it has become one of the dominant features of the contemporary novel. The modern phenomenon of sex has been considered very different from that of natural one. In the natural sense, sex is the

means of regeneration, but with the changing attitudes of human beings, sex has ascribed idiosyncratic meanings with its different roles. The impact of such relations on the sufferer, the victim's behavior and psychology, as well as the rude treatment given by the society is well depicted in modern fiction.

Violence: Theoretical Background: This part of chapter will analyze and clarify the concept and theory of the term "violence" as to be used in the present research. Violence as a part of human nature exhibits on a widespread range from very personal to that of universal. Violence, deep rooted in human nature, can be found motivated by the psychological factors. Without fixed reasons violence manifests itself in a variety of ways. It may be personal violence, domestic violence, gender violence, vigilante violence, revolutionary violence, war violence, police violence, sexual violence, violent thoughts etc. This kind of violence can be seen in all Third World countries that were once colonies of the imperialist powers. The colonized feel that the imperialist powers exploited them. The contemporary South African fiction manifests religious, political, socio-economic, and racial factors of violence. The wars against imperialistic and colonial powers were fought to become politically and economically independent.

4) CHAPTER FOUR: POSTCOLONIAL STUDY OF SEX IN J. M. COETZEE'S NOVELS:

The chapter will contain critical analysis of the presentation of sex in the selected novels of J. M. Coetzee from postcolonial concern. J.M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country (1977),* is a typical tragedy of inter-racial love which results in failure and destruction of the characters driven into exile. In this novel Coetzee presents the failure in personal relationship and deep-rooted psychological and social concepts regarding sexuality. The novel *Waiting for the Barbarians (1980)* is an example of the

colonial sexual exploitation. The magistrate though being kind falls from his honorable stage due to the single event of his sexual intimacy with the barbarian girl. The novel *Age of Iron (1990)* is a cry for the failure of benevolence, interpersonal relationships, morals and family. The novel *Disgrace (1999)* is about the protagonist David Lurie struggling to find a better solution to his 'Problem of Sex'. His daughter Lucy is the representative of the entire womanhood which suffers from sexual violence. *Slow Man (2005)* is a mix of fictional and metafictional modes, and a subtle, implicated depositing of data and query. *Slow Man* is a story of imputed protagonist entangled in relationship, a man at the end of his sexual life, coming to terms with his own mortality. The novel, *Diary of a Bad Year (2007)* is about the writer, called Señor C. The theme of sex here employs the colonial and postcolonial aspect through the characters presented.

5) CHAPTER FIVE: POSTCOLONIAL STUDY OF VIOLENCE IN J. M. COETZEE'S NOVELS:

This chapter will contain critical analysis of the presentation of violence in the selected novels of J. M. Coetzee from postcolonial concern. In reference to *In the Heart of the Country (1977)* the theme of inter-racial violence demonstrates powerfully. *Waiting for the Barbarians (1980)* is about the unnamed magistrate of a small unnamed colonial town is the narrator of the novel. There is an operation against the barbarians resulting violence against the natives. Here the legitimacy of imperialism is shown to the apex. *Life and Times of Michael K (1983)* presents the story of Michael K, thrown into the battlefield of life with a dense past. The allegorical movement in the novel composes a symphonic tale against the violence of war and slavery. The novel *Age of Iron (1990)* is a cry for the failure of benevolence, interpersonal relationships, morals and family. The novel is about the struggle to fling

off apartheid. The state approved violence and community violence are the apparent central issues of the novel. The novel *Disgrace (1999)* is about the thoughts that the rapists preserve about rape and sexual violence. Rapists had used sexual violence as the weapon of exploitation as well as the means of enjoyment. *Slow Man (2005)*presents child abuse and the domestic violence due to the poor economic condition. In the novel *Diary of a Bad Year (2007)* through Alan's views J. M. Coetzee criticizes the bitter situation in South Africa. He focuses on the relation between the wide spread violence and the national economy

6) CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION:

The last chapter of the thesis will present the output of the study of sex and violence as the major concern in J. M. Coetzee's postcolonial novels as analyzed in the previous chapters and will ultimately come to a certain conclusion. This conclusion will be drawn upon the application of postcolonialism with sex and violence as its major concerns in J. M. Coetzee's novels. It will also focus upon how the present research work is useful in studying the novels of J. M. Coetzee from the point of view of postcolonial study of sex and violence. As it is one of the aspects of critical evaluation, the present study remains open ended with multiple options to investigate the novels by applying various critical theories. In this chapter there will be an attempt to highlight the scope of further research.

The present synopsis is an outline of research work. The changes may occur in the chapter scheme or concerned study during the research work.

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